Hazel Shaw

Hazel Shaw (left) as Miss Rocket.

Hazel Shaw

From Tyler, Texas to Hollywood

SAMUEL CLAESSON

After being crowned Miss Television in 1950, Hazel Shaw was cast in *Arizona Manhunt* (1951). That was her breakthrough role, but you'd need a microscope to see her fleeting roles in movies like *The Desert Hawk* (1950) and *Elopement* (1951).

She was born Billie Hazel Shaw in Tyler, Texas, to Grady and Kitty Shaw, and had an ordinary childhood that included being active with the Camp Fire Girls, for which she raised a lot of money doing various fundraisers such as the Annual Doughnut Drive. It was while attending Tyler High School that she caught the acting bug and appeared in several stage productions at the Circle Theater.

In 1949, she and her parents moved to California, after her father got a job there. Hazel began modeling in magazines like Eye and Daring Romances with her impressive measurements of 35-25-32. She also posed for an advertisement for Camel cigarettes. That year, she was briefly a contract player at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and was reportedly cast in Hal Wallis' *With All My Love* (1950), but the production was canceled before filming began. It didn't discourage her, though, as she continued to appear onstage at Hayden's Playhouse.

It wasn't until winning a bevy of pageants, including Miss Rocket and Miss Television, that Universal took an interest in her and offered her a contract. There was a lot of enthusiasm about her, with columnists like Irwin Allen saying that she was "as lovely as Linda Darnell and as talented as Jane Wyman." Her height of 5'4" wasn't ideal, but it wasn't disqualifying either. She joined SAG-AFTRA on October 16, 1950, and subsequently acted in several movies. An interesting note is that she was one of the 63 actors featured in collectible trading cards included in bags of Mother's Cookies in 1953.

After a failed engagement to producer Rudy Ralston, whom she met while filming *Arizona Manhunt*, she married Arnold Kunody. This brought her career to a halt because, according to her daughter Karen, he didn't want her working anymore. Hazel left Hollywood, but she didn't leave its stars because her glamorous poolside gatherings and luncheons were frequently in the tabloids and attended by people like Jack Benny and Barbara Marx. She, at the age of 94, lives near her daughters in Carlsbad, California. She refused to do an interview, but didn't mind us publishing something about her.